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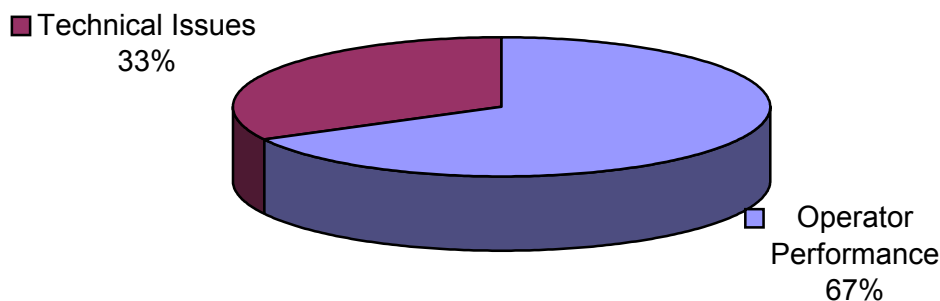
ELLIS L. KITCHEN
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FCC Docket No. 98-67

Maryland Relay Summary Log: June 1, 2002 – May 31, 2003

For the period of June 1, 2002 through May 31, 2003, Maryland Relay processed 1,519,404 calls and received a total of five hundred and fifty-four (554) customer complaints. These complaints were filed with supervisors, account managers, AT&T Relay Customer Service, and/or with the State of Maryland's Telecommunications Access of Maryland (agency which oversees the TRS contract with AT&T).

Customer Complaint 2002 - 2003 Reported by State of Maryland



All complaints are recorded in AT&T's customer concerns database. The State of Maryland and AT&T ensure that all complaints registered by phone, email, to a supervisor, or by any means, are entered into the database in a tandem effort for comprehensive data collection.

The discrepancy in the number of complaints recorded by AT&T (Appendix A) and the State of Maryland (Appendix B) can be reconciled by understanding that AT&T files only those complaints that directly refer to a specific regulation in 47 CFR Part 64. The State of Maryland's report includes all customer contact, both positive and negative, to provide the FCC more detailed information for their consideration while planning the future direction of TRS. (Appendix B)

Three complaints were filed formally with the FCC. The two that were directed to the TAM office by the FCC have been answered with a letter to the FCC. (See Attachment C) The third complaint was directed to AT&T and is still open at the time of this filing. The deadline for response to this complaint has not passed and AT&T has been in contact with the appropriate FCC office concerning this issue.

AT&T was awarded the contract to provide TRS in Maryland effective June 1, 2002. As a result of the State's RFP process and consequent contract with AT&T, ten years of Sprint's methods and procedures for accepting and processing relay calls ceased simultaneously with the introduction of an entirely new workforce, causing real and perceived problems for users. This happens any time there is a change in providers, and the State of Maryland will address this issue in its comments to the FCC's Second Report and Order.

The State of Maryland's RFP requirement for upgraded switch technology led to the Maryland Relay's installation of the most sophisticated switch currently being used for TRS. However, the functionally equivalent capabilities this switch provides caused some confusion in the user community due to lack of experience with standard telephony. The State is of the opinion that Relay users' ability to benefit from additional features was most imperative for TRS to progress toward functional equivalency. These features include:

- receiving the number of the person calling
- passing Caller-ID blocking information established at the originating number
- transmission of the originating number to emergency facilities (9-1-1)

Maryland Relay continues its outreach to broaden awareness through education in an effort to lessen user confusion.

The State of Maryland, Telecommunications Access of Maryland (TAM), is aware that some complaints are anecdotal in nature and/or the provider may not have recorded them. This may have occurred because the complaints did not include all of the required associated data. In addition, the State understands that not all consumers possess the time or awareness of procedures to file formal complaints. For the period covered by this report, the State of Maryland has again hired an outside consultant to test and evaluate service in order to proactively identify any unreported problems or anomalies related to the Maryland Relay. During the June 2002 - May 2003 reporting period, two separate quality assurance tests were conducted to assess the new TRS provider. A summary of the results of these tests is listed below. The State has also submitted the complete report. (See Appendix D) Such quality assurance tests performed by the consultant will occur on a quarterly basis during the next reporting period.

**Summary of Quality Assurance Testing Results –
Last Quarter 2002 & First Quarter 2003**

Criteria Measured	February 2003	December 2002
Number of Calls Evaluated	502	502
Number of Operators Surveyed	165	155
Overall Typing Accuracy	83%	77.1%
Calls with 95% or higher	12.4%	5.2%
Overall Verbatim	87.9%	81.7%
Calls with 95% or higher	32.9%	18.4%
Overall Typing Speed (words per minute)	61.2 wpm	58.3wpm
Calls with 60 wpm or higher	59.2%	52%
Calls at 95% Accuracy and 60 wpm	9.0%	3.2%
Calls at 95% Verbatim and 60 wpm	23.2%	15.1%
Operators provided ID number	74.3%	55.2%
Operators providing ASL transliteration	76.8%	67.6%
Calls with garbling	21	17
Calls encountering “All Operators Busy”	25	6

Following both testing/evaluation periods and corresponding reports, the following corrective measures were taken:

- The results from February, in most cases, indicate an improvement over the December 2002 results.
- Following the February results, the Maryland Relay Center team provided the State of Maryland with a written plan for performance improvement that was clearly successful.
- The State is pleased with the improvement and effort of the Relay Center team, who worked with a completely new staff of operators. This occurred though almost no experienced operators employed by the previous provider resumed employment with the new, together with the natural attrition involved when training 180 employees to learn a completely new job.

To ensure better resolution of customer concerns received by any venue, Maryland Relay, through a joint effort between the TAM office and the AT&T Relay Center team, has:

- established a 24/7 in-center customer service team;
- implemented additional training for operators to include user input and personal perspectives;
- required all operators to participate in a minimum of one Maryland Relay related community event;
- developed performance improvement plans based on the results of the independent evaluation/testing;
- made available conference rooms in the Relay Center to various user communities for their meetings to encourage interaction between Relay personnel and the user community;
- hosted user group discussions to obtain consumer feedback;
- attended various events in the diverse user communities. This effort was made to inform consumers of the new procedures, to explain the improvement afforded with the new technology, and to better discern the real problems from frustration and confusion which occur when any State Relay changes providers;
- encouraged and solicited customer feedback and registration of concerns to allow for development of resolutions;
- contacted over 100 IXC's in conjunction with the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Maryland. By stating a requirement to join the Maryland Relay platform, or show cause for exception to the PSC, a more functionally equivalent Carrier of Choice can be provided to TRS users in Maryland.

In summary, while Maryland Relay received more complaints per call this year than last year, an increase in concerns was expected due to the change of TRS provider. Yet, any state having experienced a change of provider is aware that no two TRS platforms and procedures are similar, much less the same, with the result being customer confusion and dissatisfaction. It is the opinion of Maryland Relay that our public relations/advertising/outreach efforts make us a leader in the TRS industry. These include such proactive methods as soliciting customer feedback by traditional and non-traditional means and active customer interaction. These efforts will continue to aid us in identifying and resolving issues, which will in turn lead to greater understanding and appreciation of the more functionally equivalent TRS available with Maryland Relay.

We will continue to educate users and assist customers in understanding the new processes, as well as the customer responsibilities that come with improved technology. We are working with the provider and the community to educate new operators in their skills and awareness of the user communities. We seek to increase user community knowledge of Maryland Relay and build relationships that are open and sharing between them, the provider, and the State.

The requirements contained within the new Maryland Relay contract, while causing a difficult initial contact year, have raised the bar for TRS again. These changes keep Maryland at the forefront of TRS quality of service, functional equivalency, and leading edge technology. As always, Maryland Relay strives to provide the citizens of Maryland with not only the best relay service, but also a customer service team that is available and ready to work with the customers in our efforts to provide them with a high degree of satisfaction and more functionally equivalent phone service.

Respectfully submitted,

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